

note the "points of interest" in 1887. They were almost the works of man being representative houses and small sailboats still an unexplored wilderness against white intrusion by the very mindful of repeated evictions of unscrupulous white settlers. Cutler were still the haunt of Indian Creek was a desolate track and crocodile, a dozen or more visible at once. The Miami River stream, with four or five miles length. There was no Coral Gables race track, no golf course, no fruit grove, nor even the suggestion of a mile of road anywhere being the only highway. And no Indian encampment frequently made camp on the shores at Coconut Grove for a drop of gasoline in the folds of the present. A few of the keys remain as forty years made a more where.

apparent that the Bay could try for a yacht race, and it was the Washington's Birthday with an open response to the notices and made a start, the classes. It was a success in the hands of Ada, Captain Brickell, and Edna, Captain Addison. Charles Peacock were time-keepers all hands, about fifty in the dining room at Peacock's.

given by the promoters. Thus began organized aquatic sports on the Bay, the Washington's Birthday regatta afterward being a fixture of the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club, until the displacement of sails by gasoline in general interest caused it to degenerate into a "chowder-party."

The Club had its origin a little later that spring, one day at Peacock's; Kirk Munroe broached the subject, and we at once organized, he electing me commodore, and I doing the same for him as secretary. This friendly arrangement lasted without interruption until 1909, when I declined renomination, my health being poor, and the club having transferred most of its activities to Miami. Kirk continued as secretary until 1922. I designed the club flag, bearing the emblem of a large "N" interlaced with the figures "25" signifying twenty-five degrees north latitude, since we were the most southern club in the country. Mariners abbreviate this to 25 N, but as mariners are not very common among yachtsmen the flag device has almost always had to be explained, and therefore is not entirely a success!

For many years the club membership was limited to fifty, then to one hundred, all active yachtsmen interested in the Bay, and many famous names appeared upon the roster. Headquarters for some time were in the second floor of my boathouse, built in the summer of 1886. By 1901 more room was needed and a comfortable clubhouse was erected on piling in front of the Factory, the site being given the club on condition that they maintain the wharf for general use. When the railroad came and Miami grew, Mr. Flagler¹ was anxious to give the club a fine house in the new city in return for the dignity of its name, age and associations. Many members still felt, however, that it was a Coconut Grove affair, so a com-

¹Henry M. Flagler, of Standard Oil, whose millions, genius and love of Florida transformed its East Coast, by railroad and hotel-building, from a wilderness to the American winter playground.

3939 HARDEE RD.

MUNROE, RALPH E. VINCENT GILPIN;

THE COMMODORE'S STORY

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promise was effected, whereby the club built a second house at Miami, with Mr. Flagler's help, but retained the old house at the Grove as headquarters. For some time meetings were held in both houses, in alternate months. About 1903 Camp Biscayne was started on the land back of the clubhouse, and when it became advisable to sell this property, in 1925, the club's interests had come to center largely in Miami, and it did not care to move the house. Thus abandoned, it found a stepfather in Bob Erwin, a local contractor, who bought it for one dollar, in April, 1926, slid the 40 x 25 foot, two-story structure bodily onto a barge, and towed it up one of the canals into the outskirts of Coral Gables, where it is now disguised as a residence.

So passed the winter of 1886-7 — the first in which a distinctively "winter colony" was an important element in the affairs of the Bay. Every member of this group became permanently interested in the region, and a number of them are now "prominent residents." From this time on, progressively, the development of winter homes and tourists' interests became the great work of the region. Steam communication was soon brought a step nearer by the excellent service of the Indian River Steamboat Company from the railroad at Titusville, which was extended to Lake Worth points by the narrow-gauge line from Jupiter to Juno and the small steamer *Lake Worth*. Palm Beach, with the Coconut Grove House, built by "Cap" (E. N.) Dimmick, soon outstripped the other Lake resorts and became the winter headquarters of a growing company of enthusiasts.

Travel to the Bay, however, was not affected, and the sixty miles of coast to Lake Worth remained as primitively desolate as ever until the railroad came through in 1896.

The summer of 1887 was quiet. In the fall the Hines and I went down as usual by Key West, accompanied by my friend George B. Davis, fitted out *Pelican* and *Egre* and the winter passed with few events worthy of record



THIS small group at Peacock Inn included ev
FIRST CHRISTMAS PARTY,



FIRST REGATTA OF BISCAYNE BAY Y
WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY, 18

COMMODORE'S STORY

in company, manned by the Hines and
ed had already shared some of my ad-
and one incident comes back to me as an
to his present dignities as a noted rail-
d consultant, high in the confidence of
om his leading work in the World War,
of the longshoremen's strike in New
His noteworthy career included many
f railroad development and reorganiza-
world. He had an inordinate appetite for
mer, shortly after his graduation from
own the Sound together, sadly lacking
New Bedford gave him a chance to
and he did so thoroughly, returning to
wharf where we had landed with a large
g a dozen or more assorted pies. He car-
care, and made joyful comments on the
t last, for once, he was going to have
cruise!

very dark and much encumbered with
, and as I was feeling my way through
or to locate the dinghy I heard a stum-
behind me. Turning hastily, I found that
into a try-pot — a huge iron kettle
arrels — which was half full of scummy
e rancid remnants of whale-oil. Alas for
ere catapulted into the heart of this un-
d alas for Fred, who at least partially

nfused sounds of struggle and perturba-
Fred emerged, wet, plastered with foul
d clutching in despairing hands the rag-
his precious pies! There was an ominous
k silence, and then there arose on the
old New Bedford wharf the choicest and
lection of plain and fancy profanity that
nglish could be expected to accumulate



THE "25-N" FLAG FIRST HOISTED, 1887



BISCAYNE BAY YACHT CLUB, 1901

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3939 HARDIE